

6/23/2014

Re: Release

From: Rodney Ellis <senatorrge@aol.com>
To: Jeremy Warren <Jeremy.Warren@senate.state.tx.us>
Subject: Re: Release
Date: Thu, Jul 25, 2013 11:28 am

Post on Internet and send to other D legislators.

Rodney Ellis
Texas State Senator
440 Louisiana, Suite 575
Houston, TX 77002
713.236.0306

On Jul 25, 2013, at 10:01 AM, Jeremy Warren <Jeremy.Warren@senate.state.tx.us> wrote:

Still waiting for the BD and DE to weigh in but thought you would want it out pretty soon.

<image003.jpg>

For Immediate Release
Jeremy Warren

July 25, 2013
463-0113

Contact:

(512)

Ellis Applauds DOJ Effort to Require Continued Preclearance for Texas

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Documented evidence continues to show discrimination in Texas' election procedures

(Austin, Texas)//Senator Rodney Ellis (D-Houston) today applauded the decision by the US Department of Justice to fight to require Texas to receive preclearance for any voting or election law changes.

"I applaud Attorney General Eric Holder and the US Department of Justice's decision to join the lawsuit that would require Texas to submit all voting law changes for preclearance for the next decade," said Ellis. "Anyone who thinks Texas doesn't need continued oversight simply hasn't been paying attention."

Despite the US Supreme Court's ruling on the Voting Rights Act, Texas has clearly shown a repeated and documented history of discrimination against minority voters. In fact, last year Texas was singled out as the only state to pass redistricting maps which were deliberately discriminatory.

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In 2011, Texas also approved so-called voter ID legislation that will make it significantly more difficult for approximately one million eligible Texas voters to exercise their right to vote. The legislation established some of the most restrictive voting laws in the nation. The law -- opposed by groups ranging from AARP to MALDEF to the NAACP and LULAC -- requires voters to show picture identification in order to vote. Throughout this entire process, Texas consistently failed to produce information showing the law would not have a discriminatory impact on minority voters.

"This is hopefully just the first step," said Ellis. "Congress needs to take action revamp the Voting Rights Act to create a formula which takes into account current and historical discrimination and bias while meeting the requirements the Supreme Court has set out. Otherwise, the voting rights of millions of Americans are in peril."

In the last decade, Texas continued to experience tremendous growth, and that meant our state added four new members of Congress, and dramatically changed State House and Senate districts. African Americans and Hispanics accounted for over 90 percent of that growth, which should have meant additional seats for minority candidates. Unfortunately, the Republican-dominated legislature drew maps which ignored this growth and packed minority voters into fewer districts, weakening their voting strength while strengthening Anglo voting power in Texas. For instance, of the four congressional districts created, only one real minority opportunity district was created, despite the fact that nearly all Texas' growth is due to minority -- predominantly Hispanic -- growth. And that district was in North Texas, not Harris County.

In state legislative races nearly 90 percent of Texas growth was due to growing minority population, yet we gained no new seats in House and Senate. Texas is now 54.1 percent minority -- and growing -- yet only one-third of Texas legislative seats are minority opportunity districts.

"It is a sad and discomfiting fact that Texas is the only state in the country which adopted redistricting plans following the 2010 Census that have been ruled to be deliberately discriminatory to African-American and Latino voters," said Ellis. "Other states covered under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, including Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia, were able to adopt redistricting plans without deliberately discriminating against their minority citizens. In each instance these other covered states gained approval of their plans under the Voting Rights Act, but not Texas."

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